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17. SIDEWAYS LEAP-FROGGING BY THE LARGE GREY BABBLERS, *TURDOIDES MALCOLMI* (SYKES)

Leap-frogging in the Common Babblers (*Turdoides caudatus*) has been recorded by me earlier (*JBNHS* 89: 376), but not so far among the Large Grey Babbler (*Turdoides malcolmi*).

On 11 September 1991 in front of my residence at Sidhi, Madhya Pradesh, four birds were seen perched on an electric line. Suddenly two of them indulged in sideways leap-frogging by performing closely huddled sideways jumps, one over the other, in quick succession. In this manner,

they traversed a distance of about a metre on the electric line, thereafter indulged in caressing each other with bills. Before any more observations could be made, the pair flew away.

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18. PIPIT (*ANTHUS* SP.) PREYING ON LEECHES

Ponmudi (c. 1035 m above msl) is a spur hill of the Southern Western Ghats, about 56 km NE. of Trivandrum. I was watching birds there on 10.7.94 at the edge of an evergreen forest patch which abuts a steep grassy hill side with rocky outcrops and slippery sheet-rocks. Here a Pipit was observed to pick up and swallow a leech from the tip of a grass blade. Within the next thirty odd minutes while I watched it, the bird picked and gulped down two more leeches. Once it even jumped up with wings spread out to capture a leech which was moving at the tip of a leaf blade some 1 m above the ground. The characteristic undulating movement of the leeches might have attracted the bird's attention

leading to their predation. While several species of insects together with other arthropods are listed in the dietary of pipits, it seems that leeches have not been hitherto recorded. Moreover such an instance of avian predation on leeches is interesting and seemingly rare.

I was able to watch the bird very closely for a long time using a pair of 8 x 40 field glasses, and from the field characters and call, it was probably the Brown Rock Pipit (*Anthus similis* Jerdon).

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